



N O W

by Juan Downey

Nine performers in meditation attempt to produce alpha-waves. Their brain activity controls the recurrence of pre-recorded quotations from Plato's dialogues.

9 performers/9 video-channels/
alpha-wave detectors/9 audio-
recordings/public's shadows.
Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse,
New York, 1973.

Plato's dialogues researched
in collaboration with Jerry
Bowen.

...human beings living in an underground cavern, which has a mouth open towards the light and reaching all along the cavern; here they have been from their childhood, and have their legs and necks chained so that they can not move, and can only see before them, being prevented by the chains from turning round their heads. Above and behind them a fire is blazing at a distance, and between the fire and the prisoners there is a raised way; and you will see, if you look, a low wall built along the way, like the screen which marionette players have in front of them, over which they show the puppets.

I see.

And you see, men passing along the wall carrying all sorts of vessels, and statues and figures of animals made of wood and stone and various materials, which appear over the wall? Some of them are talking others silent.

You have shown me a strange image, and they are strange prisoners.

Like ourselves, and they see only their shadows, or the shadows of one another, which the fire throws on the opposite wall of the cave?

True how could they see anything but the shadows if they were never allowed to move their heads?

And the objects which are being carried in like manner they would only see the shadows?

Plato: The Republic